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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Foundation Budget Review Commission Holding Public Hearing at Northampton High School on January 10, 2015

Mayor David J. Narkewicz announced that the state Foundation Budget Review Commission is holding a public hearing on Saturday, January 10th from 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. in the Northampton High School auditorium at 380 Elm Street, Northampton.

The foundation budget, established in M.G.L. Chapter 70, defines the minimum level of school spending necessary to provide an adequate education to students. Foundation budgets are established annually by the state for each school district and form the basis for both the required local contribution and Chapter 70 education school aid to municipal school districts.

Established as part of the then-landmark Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, the foundation budget has long been criticized by local municipal and education leaders for being out of date, failing to incorporate significant educational changes and mandates, and not fully accounting for the rising costs of school budget items like health care and special education.

Mayor Narkewicz and municipal leaders across the state have lobbied for changes to the foundation budget and related formulas for many years. In 2014, the legislature created the Foundation Budget Review Commission to review the way school foundation budgets are calculated and to make recommendations for potential changes in those calculations.

This is the third of a series of public hearings that the Commission plans to hold across the state over the next several months and the first hearing held in western Massachusetts. Mayor Narkewicz thanked State Representative Peter Kocot for his efforts to have the hearing held in Northampton. Both Mayor Narkewicz and Northampton Public Schools Superintendent John Provost are scheduled to testify along with other area municipal and educational leaders.

The Foundation Budget Review Commission has indicated that due to the limited time frame of the hearing and the number of people providing oral testimony, the length of such testimony will be limited to 3 minutes per person. Written comments and testimony will also be accepted after the hearing, and may be submitted to Jennie Williamson by e-mail at Jennie.Williamson@mahouse.gov.

More information about the Foundation Budget Review Commission is available at:
www.mma.org/foundation